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THE SOURCES OF RADICAL ISLAMIC CONDUCT:
UNDERSTANDING AND NEUTRALIZING A TRANSNATIONAL IDEOLOGICAL THREAT

by

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This paper deals with the rise and continued hostile activities of radical Islamic transnational movements, networks and groups. Central to their goals is the elimination of American political, cultural and military influence throughout the Muslim World, especially in terms of its support of Israel in the Middle East and the impact Western secular values pose to Muslim societies. This paper will argue that the rise of these groups is a function of the failure of secular state institutions in predominately Muslim countries to effectively provide for the basic needs and demands of their populations. This in turn has led disaffected and extremely needy elements of such societies to look at alternative actors for means of survival, security and self-actualization. Transforming themselves at first into instruments of social action, radical Islamic groups have met this demand for meeting the wants of underclass Muslims by expanding the range of their activities from humanitarian relief to ideological indoctrination and ultimately armed struggle against what they perceive to be enemies of Islam on a transnational basis. Removing such a threat by neutralizing its appeal will substantially add to the efforts to bring peace to the Middle East.

As part of this inquiry, this paper will examine the sources and causes of radical Islamic conduct followed by an analysis of the profoundly different worldview Islam has in terms of the role religion should have on state and society. In conclusion, this paper will argue that one way to defeat radical political Islamic movements is to assist Muslim countries to fully develop, broaden and strengthen their secular based state structures. In this way political claims made by radical Islamist groups of supremacy by Islam over the state can be reduced and eventually eliminated. By strengthening secular state institutions in Muslim nations, citizens of those countries will come to rely on state structures rather than radical political actors presently protected by the ideological cover of religion. If fully implemented and supported, such policies should eventually lead to the depoliticization of Islam giving rise to pluralist models of democratic expression. By so doing, Islam as a religion would serve to complement rather than dominate the structures of the state by operating within spiritual rather than political arenas, thereby marginalizing radical groups who wish to challenge and threaten alternate visions of society that differ from theirs.

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PREFACE

Two conflicting sources of influence guide the ideological, political, and social conduct of radical Islamic transnational movements that currently threaten the vital interests and security of both the United States and its closest allies and partners. The first is a communitarian, universalist vision of Islam as a religious and political ideology which sees Muslims engaged in a final struggle against the forces of non-believers and evil. The second source are those specific xenophobic and exclusionary tendencies inherent within various countries and societal groups where Islam is practiced and also serves as the dominant arbiter for social norms. Together, these two sources guide the actions and practices not only of the leadership of movements such as *al-Qaeda*, but significantly influence other societal groups, to include political and military elites in those countries where Islam is the principal religious confession.

Inherent contradictions exist however between these two contrasting, and in the end, mutually exclusive views. Throughout the history of Islam, movements and societies that centered their means of societal control solely upon the foundation of *Qur'anic* based beliefs and religious ideologies have inevitably been forced to either modify the means and basis of social control to accommodate non-Islamic external influences, or face eventual collapse.

It is interesting to note that the current challenge to both the West and Western-oriented Muslim countries from radical Islamist movements are based on a vision of “perfect” Islam which never existed in the past, and assuredly could not exist under current modernist influences and conditions. Rather than accept such external modernizing secular influences that admittedly serve to change the societies they enter, and thereby challenge the foundations of their ability to control populations through belief, the response of radical Islamist movements has been framed in terms of declaring a need to battle the secular modernism which the United States and the West represents. At the same time these groups seek to impose their narrow and mostly reactionary vision of religious traditionalism on Muslim societies they seek to control and expand. Whether by intention or omission, these rival views of society—that of Western secularism and Islamic traditionalism—have become mutually exclusive and hostile ideologies of late that are shaping what some commentators contend is the new World War of our time.

The way forward for the West in this contest, short of accepting the demands made by such radical Islamist transnational groups, is to find ways to contain, deter, and ultimately neutralize the ideological attraction these movements have for their target audiences. By so doing, the attendant threat these movements pose not only to the United States and other non-Islamic states, but also to moderate and progressive Muslim societies as well, will be eliminated or significantly reduced. Policies and initiatives that serve to contain and deter them however

must go past previous thresholds applied to earlier collectivist ideological threats such as Fascism and Communism. Strategies that deterred, contained and eventually defeated those ideologies relied on either the threat or actual use of compellence as a means that forced them to comply. In this sense, the conflicts against Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia or Imperial Japan were easier to visualize and contend with because the ideologies the Western liberal democracies fought against were intrinsically bound with the will of the people until such time that their existence as a nation was put into question. Therefore the defeat of Nazi Germany meant the defeat of Nazi ideology as well; likewise with the collapse of Communism in Russia. In both these cases the national identity of the people remained intact even as the pernicious ideology that sought to bind with that identity was cast off by the German and Russian peoples. Although similar in some ways, the use of Islam by radical Islamic actors as justification for their actions complicates this paradigm because of the near total merging of religion with identity in Muslim societies. Radical Islamist groups that cover their ideological outlook by appropriating Islam as the foundation of their identity have therefore been much more successful in combining their message with themes their target audiences can understand and sympathize with.

Another reason a politicized and radical version of Islam as a transnational ideology has been successful in spreading its message is because religious groups which advocate its policies do so largely out of the sight of the state. Moreover, such ideologies have proven capable of operating within and beneath the social fabric of states. By so doing, these movements are able to advocate for and make use of violence to achieve their ends largely undetected within the midst and margins of the societies they exist in. Such religiously based adversaries can be defeated only through a consistent and constant application of economic, social, political and informational counter-forces that produce and increase strains under which they must operate to uncontrollable proportions so that the inherent contradictions contained within their ideological framework cause their various component elements to collapse or become irrelevant to the target audience they seek to represent and control. In order to accomplish this, the reasons which cause so many people to find appeal and comfort in the message of radical Islamism must be removed, otherwise radical Islamists will continue to give voice and force to new adherents from present and future generations of disaffected and dispossessed people throughout the Muslim world.

At the same time, civil and political institutions within predominately Islamic countries must be strengthened in order to demonstrate that Western inspired modernism and Islam are not mutually exclusive, but rather, can both coexist and advance together. Indeed, it is the key political challenge of our time in the West to convince the Muslim *umma*—the community of

believers—that Western concepts of the state and modernity are not a threat to Islam, but rather can be complementary and positive.

The issues examined in this paper conclude that the challenges facing Islamic societies are compounded, not improved, by the additional pressures brought to bear by Islamist groups. The use of Islam to justify the violent activities of radical Islamist movements on behalf of victims of oppression has yet to be effectively challenged or countered from within the Muslim world. Instead, such organizations tend to garner sympathy and support by members of societies left without the means of personal or collective power. Such limited worldviews must be negated through clear evidence that modernity can provide material gain and economic prosperity, educational opportunity, and political voice to those vast segments of Islamic societies most prone to be attracted to radical messages because of the innate poverty of their own existence.

A further *sine qua non* for neutralizing radical tendencies of political Islam is resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a manner considered equitable to dispossessed Arabs since the continued occupation of Palestinian territory and suppression of legitimate Palestinian aspirations by Israel provides much of the fuel which radical Islamist actors continually enflame mass Muslim public opinion. Likewise, a crisis of political identity and a lack of prospects for the future continually force many Muslims to distrust the intentions of both their current leadership as well as the wider non-Muslim world which increasingly sees religion as a matter of individual choice and confession rather than an aspect of political control and compulsion.

Ultimately, it will be for Muslim societies to decide for themselves the path they will take to ameliorate their current condition without resort to movements and actors whose basis for legitimacy rests on their desire to eliminate rival views and models of civil society which differ from theirs. It is hoped that this project might in some small way provide a degree of insight and answers that will assist in a wider solution to a problem facing both Islam and the West.

I would be remiss if I did not close by acknowledging the thought provoking discussions and intellectual reinforcement provided by Ms. Christine D. Shelly who took time from her demanding schedule as Deputy Commandant of the U.S. Army War College to serve as the Faculty Advisor for this project by patiently reviewing, advising and encouraging the author to proceed to completion. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Anthony Joes of the U.S. Army War College Department of National Security and Strategy for the efforts and assistance he continually gave during the preparation of this project. If this project contains any merit, it is due to the help they and others willingly gave during its preparation.

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THE ROOTS OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT

“...we have revealed to thee the Book with the Truth in order that thou may judge men by means of what God hath shown thee...”

—Qur'an IV:106¹

In examining the origins of contemporary radical Islamic conduct, a closer look at the underlying principles of Islam as a religion is needed. Central to its basis as a faith is the concept of submission and submergence of the individual to the will of God. The significance of submission is reflected in the term *Islam* itself, being derived from the Arabic letters that stand for *s-l-m*, which are translated to mean either salvation, peace and submission, or all of these concepts. In its clearest *Qur'anic*² meaning, it is the notion of submission of the individual to the will of God—*Allah* through the recitation of the profession of belief.³ Once spoken, accepted, and believed, a person can be considered to have submitted to the will of God and therefore ready to become a Muslim. In this idea, Islam takes on its most definitive form from the time of the Prophet Muhammad onwards.

Fundamental to Islam as a creed are the revelations that Muhammad⁴ began to receive in his fortieth year in 610 AD/CE while earning a living as an illiterate caravan leader and trader moving between the various towns and cities of Arabia and the Near East. For the next twenty years through times of turmoil and eventual triumph, Muhammad would revolutionize the world around him, using both sword and word to exhort the peoples of the Arabian Peninsula to return to what he declared was the true faith of their forefathers. In this respect a distinction must be made to see that Muhammad was not the founder of Islam, for that faith already existed since the time of the Biblical Patriarch Abraham. Instead, he sought to reform and purify the set of beliefs in the one and only Divine Being. Called *Allah* in the classical Arabic of Muhammad's time and since, *Allah* is the same God who spoke to Abraham and Moses as *Yahweh* and is in fact an Arabic transliteration of the Hebrew for the secret appellation given to Him by the ancient Israelites. To Muhammad and those who followed him, this one and true faith had become corrupted through various practices which by his time had degenerated into manifestations of polytheism and idolatry among the various peoples of Arabia. In this Muhammad found ample evidence of discord and disillusion among the scattered tribes of the Arabian Peninsula.

Even the various early Christian churches and sects seemed to have taken on certain aspects of polytheism through interpretations of the Trinity which proclaimed Jesus to be the son of, and co-equal to God along with the Holy Spirit, the veneration of the Virgin Mary distinct from her role as a woman chosen by God, and attributions of specific powers to saints.⁵ In the messages Muhammad received, all these views were anathema, as well as other practices and beliefs held by tribal groups never exposed to either Hebraic or Christian doctrines, all of which Muhammad and his growing number of followers considered pagan. Muhammad declared that the essential quality of God was His “Oneness,” and therefore assumed the role of reforming messenger and final Prophet in order to restore the faith given by God through earlier revelations. For Muhammad, those earlier revelations made clear the straight path needed by believers to attain salvation for all time and for all peoples. Much like his prophetic predecessors of the Old and New Testaments, he turned his life into one of religious activism, urging the peoples of Arabia through his journeys and meetings to return to the path which venerated the one, true God as originally revealed to the Patriarch Abraham.⁶

At the time of his calling, the majority of Arabs lived in unawareness of Allah.⁷ This period before his revelation Muhammad termed the *jahiliyya*—the time of ignorance harkening back to a period in the pre-Islamic, pagan past of the Semitic peoples. But Muhammad also castigated the Jewish and Christian communities which also existed in and around the Arabia of his time for having distorted through succeeding generations what he saw as God’s original revelations to both Moses and Jesus,⁸ a belief that still holds currency for most Muslims. For devout Muslim’s of today, as much as for those who listened to the words of Muhammad during his life, the foundation of Islamic faith rests on the implementation of God’s will, and the establishment of the rule of God on earth. Islam therefore demanded not only submission of the individual, but of the collective society as well. Hence, the state as developed within the framework of Islamic societies is one which also must submit to the will of God.

This emphasis on submission, reformation, and Divine rule would continue as major guideposts within Islam from the time of Muhammad up to the radical Islamic groups and organizations of today, which in their own way, seek to emulate the life and practices of the Prophet. Indeed, throughout Islamic history, a recurrent theme is the rise of dissident religious leaders who with the help of influential lay followers would serve as radical reformers to condemn existing practices in order to re-establish a “purified” and usually severe form of Islam ostensibly based on the original teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. In this respect, Muhammad has continued to serve as the ultimate role model in all matters of life and faith for Muslims since the time of his revelations. Most important for the political Islam of today is the

merging of religion and rule that Muhammad accomplished following the submission of Mecca where in the final years of his life he assumed the role of vicar on earth for God.

This nexus between religion and rule in Islam then is one that goes to the very heart of Muhammad's teachings. Unlike Western concepts of religion which allows for the separation between the sacred and the secular, classical Islam neither permits, nor has room for such compartmentalization. Islam should therefore be looked at as a cataclaxical or network focused model of social organization; that is, as a self-contained ideological system of exchange between belief and believer which encompasses both convictions and practices. As a cataclaxy,⁹ Islam exists as an order *sui generis*, therefore allowing a great variety of collective and individual purposes to be fulfilled.

It is essential to understand that Islam as a belief system also serves as an ideology which can, in a number of cases and does, merge state and religion.¹⁰ In this respect Islam is quite different from the secular democratic state model predominate in the West. The Islamic worldview is built upon four reinforcing pillars: legitimacy as presupposed through the divine revelations contained in the *Qur'an*, orthodoxy in terms of accepted and unchanging Muslim beliefs, orthopraxy as experienced by shared and unquestionable practices, and lastly a sense of collective identity through the acceptance of common historical traditions paired with a shared vision of a cosmological future. These pillars also serve to mutually support and interact with each other as a means by which the believer is constantly reminded of his or her obligations as a member of a larger community that transcends nationality. Taken together as shown in the diagram below (figure 1), these pillars serve as unchanging constants in a believer's life. As one popular and very readable text that seeks to explain the meaning and practices of Islam to a wide Western audience puts it, "Islam is not a religion...but a complete way of life." A "Muslim" therefore is a person who has submitted themselves to the will of God through "self-surrender." Islam is also described as a "deen" or lifestyle that is all encompassing and carried out through lifelong rituals and obligations.¹¹

Applied to the individual, this worldview is simple enough to understand. However, when applied to the collective, provision must be made to ensure that the disparate elements of society do not stray from the path of accepted belief and practice. Religion is therefore used as both an ideology and a transcendent homeland, which in the words of one of the most influential modern Islamists, "is then to be carried throughout the earth to the whole of mankind, as the object of this religion is all humanity and its sphere of action is the whole earth."¹²

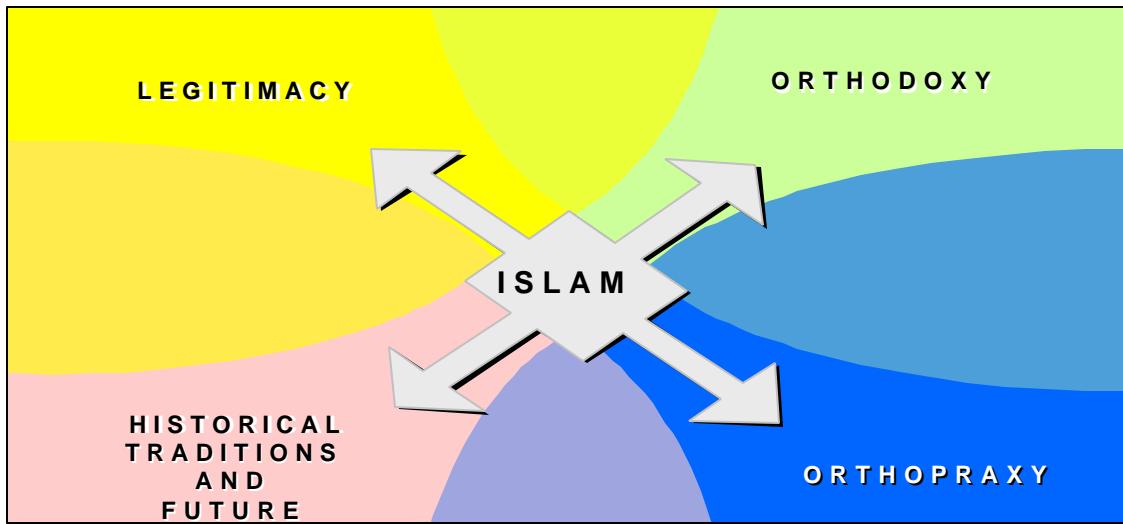


FIGURE 1: COMPONENTS OF ISLAM AS A BELIEF SYSTEM

The four components of the Islamic Religious Belief System: Legitimacy (derived from the Qur'an), Orthodoxy (the correct way of believing Islam), Orthopraxy (the correct way of practicing Islam), and shared Historical Traditions and visions of the Future. Together, each of these four components interact and influence each other while at the same time reinforcing the message and power of Islam as a complete catallaxy or system of exchanges of existence.

This is where the relationship between religion and rule again comes to the forefront, as even the Prophet Muhammad realized, for without central authority to guide believers, errors and even false prophets could arise. Therefore, it became incumbent within the concept of Islam, that the primacy of belief in God must go unchallenged with the state conceived as only being a part of a religious based existential system.

The next diagram (figure 2) presents this holistic notion in terms of showing the components of Islam as an ideology with the means of directing the collective interests of believers within a community. Building on the previous diagram, the interaction between legitimacy, orthodoxy, orthopraxy and historical traditions are present and interlocking. The differences in this diagram are the inclusion of three major societal spheres of interest that universally impact on both the individual and the wider community in any organized society. These societal spheres include the political system in whatever form it might take, the economic system as a function of the need for people to interact for provision of goods and services, and the prevailing socio-cultural values and aspects common to any community to include (but not limited to) language, arts, and means of social interaction. The key point in this diagram is that

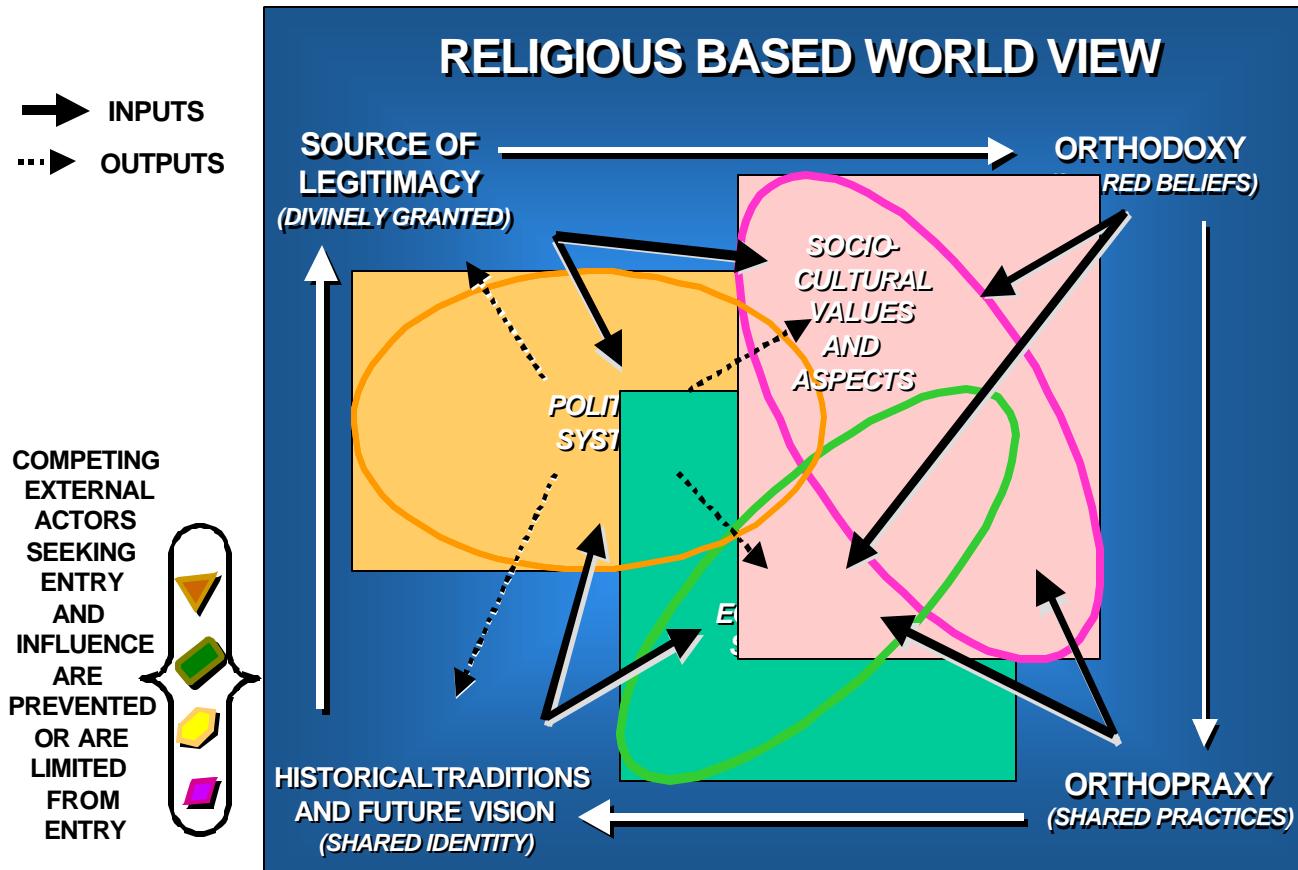


FIGURE 2: ISLAMIC STATE CATALELAXICAL MODEL

This diagram shows the extent of the Islamic religious based world-view. The four components cited in Figure 1 now not only reinforce each other, they serve to interact on the Political, Economic and Socio-Cultural spheres of life of both the individual and the collective. Being self sealed or hermetical, such a system also seeks (though is not capable) of preventing entry of external actors which can influence or change the system as a whole.

Islam as a religious ideology surrounds and influences each of these three major spheres of communal life. From the Islamic perspective, the ideal form of governance is one in which the state cannot and must not control Islam. Rather, it is Islam as a belief system that must control the state and its institutions as well as the economic means and socio-cultural values and aspects which support society.

This concept of societal organization contrasts greatly with the modern Western secular worldview which is based on the elimination of metaphysical aspects of control over the state through the compartmentalization of religion and other faith based belief systems as only one of several competing spheres of interest. The Western secular model also stresses the inclusion of competing actors and influences both outside and inside society which allows for the primacy

of individual choice, at times even at the expense of the collective community. As shown in the diagram below (figure 3), instead of only three major spheres of communal activities, the secular state model relegates religion to be one of several balancing spheres of societal influence. In this case however, religion is no longer the predominate environment and medium in which all social activity must take place or be relegated by. Instead, adherence or non-adherence to a belief system becomes an individual choice within a defined area, taking religion from being a prescribed activity.

Freed of religious control in the secular based worldview, the political domain is able to expand the degree and depth of its social jurisdiction. Since the secular state model supplants religion as the focal point of societal interest, both orthodoxy and orthopraxy fall away as

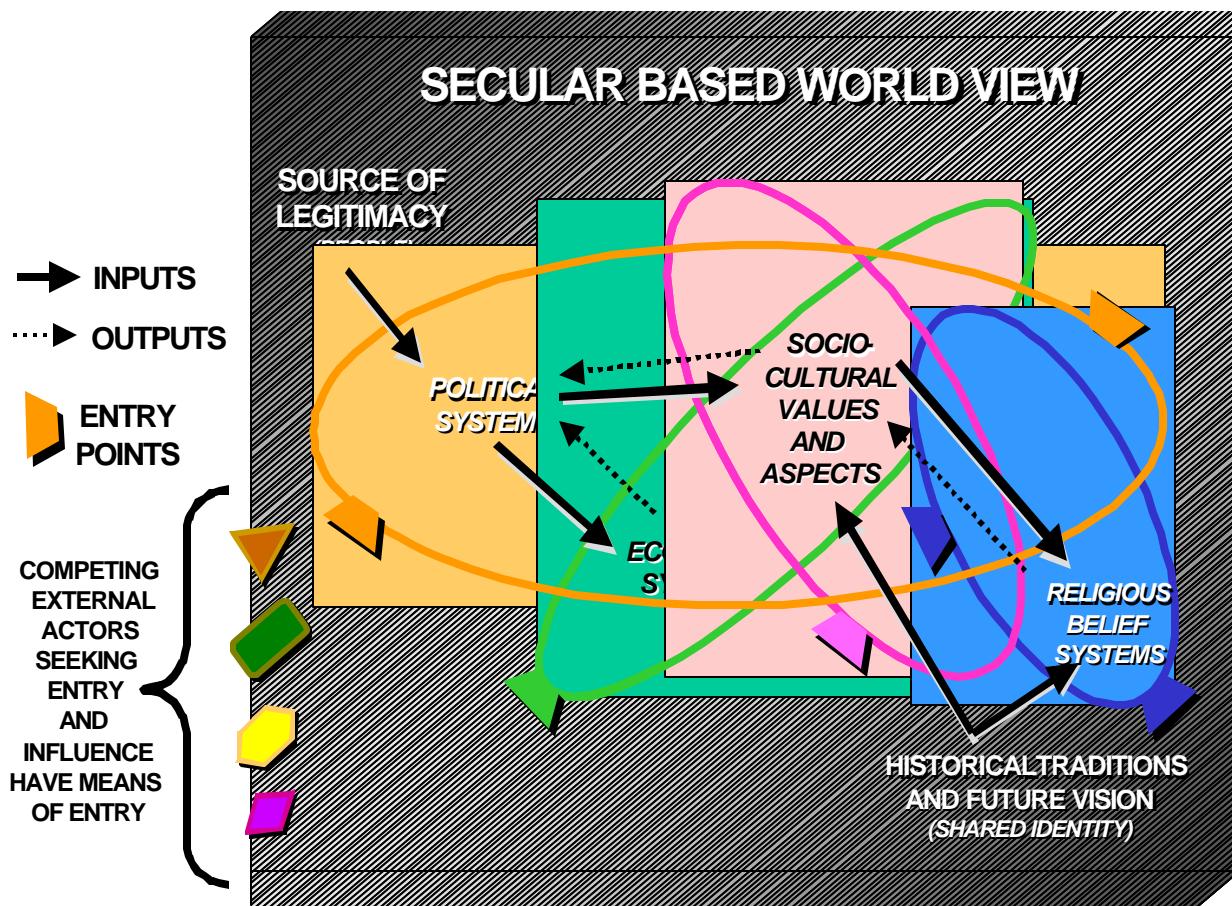


FIGURE 3: SECULAR STATE CATTALLAXICAL MODEL

In contrast to the Religious based world-view, the Secular based one allows for entry points by other competing actors, ideas and influences. Additionally, it relegates religion and other belief systems into being only one of several major spheres of societal interaction. Lastly, and most significantly, it substitutes the people in their role as citizens as the source of legitimacy instead of a Divine mandate.

constants, being substituted an increase in the shared identification of people through history, language and culture—in short, whatever shared sense of identity a society loses by de-emphasizing religious belief as a component criteria for social membership, the secular state gains in terms of nationalist identity. Just as important, and critical to the differing view of societies that the secular state represents vice that of the religious state, is the replacement of the people as citizens as the ultimate source of legitimacy for social order rather than a Divine mandate. In this way, the secular state is able to allow entry of competing external actors and influences to a degree that permits it to transform them rather than preventing or limiting entry of such influences as the religious state tends to do. By so doing, the Secular State encourages the dispersal of economic benefits to various segments while permitting the introduction of divergent cultural characteristics. This introduction of new cultural characteristics in turn allows for competition between, and over religious belief systems through the creation of entry points for other competing actors as shown in the diagram above (figure 3).

As mentioned above, these two models of societal organization—the religious vice the secular—deviate most critically in terms of where the source of their legitimacy comes from. For the secular based model as adopted by most Western nations (and theoretically almost every other modern state as well), it stems from the people. For the religious societal construct which Islam exemplifies, the basis of legitimacy for those who rule is that of Divinely given scripture. These contrasting and inevitably rival views of societal construction will recur throughout this paper. This difference in worldviews is essential to understanding the fundamental basis of conflict that confronts Islam today as a belief system that sees itself challenged by the forces of Western modernity and secularism, and therefore the resistance some radical adherents undertake. In short, one of the critical questions facing Islam today is whether the secular model of societal organization that predominates in the West and is subscribed to at least in theory by most governments in power can be acceptable or adaptable to those who believe in the tenants of Islam. The dichotomy between secular and religious concepts of society rests on the resolution of this paradox: how can a worldview that insists that its existence is based on the primacy of religion over every sphere of life accept a rival view that relegates religion to a secondary role within an individual's life. Perhaps the question is not even about acceptance of the secular state. It might in fact be whether Islam as a religious ideology can even co-exist within a secular state if it continues to view the state as a competitor. If the answer is that it cannot, then a zero sum game of Political Islam as an ideology confronting the secular Western state for its own survival is inevitable, and is the basis for the conflict we have seen arising in the past several decades.

ISLAM AS A NATION

"Knowest thou not that it is God unto whom belongeth the sovereignty of the heavens and earth...?"

—Qur'an II:110¹³

Central to the life and thoughts of Muslims is the feeling that they are united in a larger context than that afforded by the Western construct of the state. To the contrary, the state is seen as an alien intrusion which Western nation-states imposed throughout the world as a means to enforce control through the division of peoples. In the fullest sense then, Islam presupposes the concept of the state by seeing all believers to be members of a greater *umma* or community. In this way, religion is given primacy over secular models which reduce or ignore the central place of God in the lives of individuals and communities. Presently, a great awakening is taking place around the Muslim world led largely by Islamist activists¹⁴ wherein use is made of technology and information systems to spread and reinforce the faith. To Islamists, regardless of their personal views and paths, Islam exists as a nation, and the only requirement for citizenship is acceptance of Islam as a way of life.

If Islam is the nation, then the *Qur'an* serves the dual role of being both the constitution and the final testament revealed by God to Muhammad. Both theologically and philosophically, the *Qur'an* expresses the thoughts and beliefs of the Prophet Mohammad as he received divine revelations directly from God. Particularly important are the assertions made by Muhammad that the revelations he personally received from God served as the "seal of the prophets" and that upon his death, no further word thereafter would be sent from the Divine Creator. Thus it is seen by Muslims as the "eternal, uncreated, literal word of God—the *kalam al Allah*"¹⁵ to be used as the guide for humanity to live by.

Divided into 114 chapters known as *suras* which consist of 6,000 verses called *ayats*, the *Qur'an* was revealed to Muhammad over a period of 22 years and recorded word for word by attentive followers during his lifetime.¹⁶ Aside from the *Qur'an* there exists two other sources of traditional and effectively unchangeable Islamic conduct, that of the *Hadith*—the sayings of the Prophet, and that of the *Sunna*—the acts of the Prophet. Together, with the *Qur'an* being paramount in importance, these books serve to regulate the beliefs, actions and world-views of hundreds of millions of Muslims throughout the world.

Despite the universal concept of acceptance into a wider community by its adherents, there exists within the Islamic view of the world, the parallel themes of the need for unity

amongst believers and the deep dread of disunity that too often appears as the reality exist. Central to a Muslim's view of the world is the fact that the *Qur'an* sees humanity as being divided into two conflicting camps. One camp, the “*dar al-Islam*” literally means the place of those who submit, while the other opposing side is that of the “*dar al-Harm*”—the abode of those at war or in rebellion against submission. In such a sharply defined world, little room exists for compromise on the part of those who believe and therefore submit, as opposed to those who resist the eternal message of God as revealed through the Prophet Mohammed and recorded in the *Qur'an*. Such a view lies at the heart of the image proponents of Islamic fundamentalism have set for Islam as a self-propelling ideology for contemporary life.¹⁷ Unlike Judaism, whose adherents see it fundamentally as a closed religion of believers who claim God's message was specific in meaning to them, Islam from early on declared the universality of its message and meaning, declaring it applicable to all of humanity. Therefore, much like Christianity, one of the key elements of the Islamic confession is the obligation on the part of believers that its word must be spread. Moreover, central to Islam as a faith and way of life is the notion that its word must also be obeyed and practiced. Thus, as one noted scholar writes, “more so than either Judaism or Christianity which calls on its believers to practice orthodoxy in one fashion or another through established beliefs, Islam in addition insists through the medium of the *Qur'an* on orthopraxy as well.”¹⁸

The ideal world for radical Islamists is one wherein the Muslim *umma* would be an example to other nations to follow. As such they look back to Muhammad and the first Muslim community he founded in Medina as the model for societal relationships to be based on, seeing in this period an ideal mixture of political and religious affairs which implemented the socially just society envisioned by the *Qur'an*. Going back to figure 2 above, the four pillars of legitimacy, orthodoxy, orthopraxy and historical traditions are used as reinforcing gatekeepers, preventing the entry of competing actors, ideas and influences which might serve to challenge the primacy of the established religious based order. Of course the reality of societies attempting to establish Qur'anic rule, let alone other religiously inspired movements based on spiritual compassion has fallen far short of expectations throughout history. One only needs to imagine that the mid-16th Century Geneva of Zwingli and Calvin had more in common with the late 20th Century Afghanistan of the *Taliban* than with current Western cultural norms.

In addition to the traditional view of the division of the world into two parts—one of believers, the other of non-believers; a new and potent variant of associating Islam with the masses of poor and dispossessed believers around the world has gained currency with radical Islamic activists. Such an identification with the exploitation of the powerless by those in power

has even allowed radical Islamists to embrace non-Muslims and other non-believers who are equally seen to be the victims of those in power irregardless of whether they suffer at the hands of a non-believer or those who outwardly claim to be Muslim. Although such notions of Islamic “liberation theology” has taken hold mostly from the minority *Shi'a*¹⁹ denominations of Muslims in recent years, the vision of a classless society espoused by the Prophet has immense appeal to many millions of Muslims who cannot understand the reasons for the grinding poverty of their existence.

Islamic clerics and populists seek to explain to the poor and dispossessed in concrete terms that portray the underlying political and economic reasons for the perceived unfairness and suffering righteous believers must endure is because of the selfishness and corruption of the West as represented by the United States and those who serve its interests. It is not without reason that the *Shi'a* mullah's under the guidance and encouragement of Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran continually referred to the United States as the “Great Satan” throughout the 1980's and even occasionally in recent times as well. By identifying America and its government as being the representatives of the devil, radical Islamists are able to quickly and effectively portray their enemy as the ultimate enemy of God. From their theologically based standpoint, although Satan in the guise of America might possess strength and even win certain victories for the here and now, ultimate victory is assured to those who believe in the righteous path. Conversely inevitable and unstoppable damnation is guaranteed through God's will to both Satan and those who support his ways.

Radical by design, but simple to understand, radical Islamic activists develop themes which take the side and glorify the struggles and sufferings of the victims of oppression have tremendous appeal to the vast majority of Muslims whose earthly existence is one of unrelieved poverty and hopelessness. Advocated by groups such as *Hizbu'llah*,²⁰ this particularly populist Islamic “oppression theology” posits that humanity is divided into two segments—the “oppressed” and the “oppressors.” In such a construct an identification by the Islamic *umma* is made with all oppressed people, even non-Muslims. Likewise, in an almost Marxian class formulation, so-called Muslims can be seen as oppressors of both Muslims and non-Muslims. As such, trans-religious solidarity and support can and should be shown to those suffering under the exploitation of “oppressors” of any religious creed. Indeed, by siding and fighting for the uplifting of such unfortunates, it is hoped that oppressed non-believers will inevitably see the succor and hope Islam as a creed and way of life offers. As Amal Saad-Ghorayeb notes in his perceptive study of *Hizbu'llah*, “ the secular origins of class criterion... resulting in the Islamicization of class analysis whose defining elements, exploitation and poverty, become

virtues". Such a formulation presents a potent mixture of Marxist dialectics with Islamic imagery which is accessible and gratifying to most Muslims.²¹ With such imagery however, comes the ways and means for the further spread or defense of Islam in a radicalized and politicized context that includes struggling in belligerent and violent ways.

THE MEANING OF JIHAD WITHIN RADICAL ISLAMIC THOUGHT

“...Believe in God and His Messenger, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the cause of God with your property and your persons...He will forgive ye your sins, and admit thee to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, and to beautiful Mansions in Gardens of Eternity.”

—Qur'an LXI:10-12²²

For the devout Muslim—one who has submitted to the will of God—the way Islam's message should be spread can come in a number of ways, but it is clear through repeated passages within the *Qur'an* that exertion and struggle on behalf of God — or 'jihad' — is an essential part of the requirement for being an active believer. A “*mujahid*” therefore is a Muslim who consciously practices *jihad* in order “to win God's good pleasure, to establish His religion's supremacy, and to make His Word prevail” as a current internet web site authoritatively states.²³

Jihad also has at least two definitions. The greater of these is the spiritual struggle each person must engage in against “vice, passion and ignorance.”²⁴ The second type of *jihad* entails the struggle against non-believers as expressed by those peoples and nations which constitute the “*dar al-harb*”—the abode of war. Battling against the abode of war is stated as an obligation in both the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* since this is seen as the only way “for the peace of Islam to take the place of the warlike conditions” which non-Muslim societies exhibit.²⁵

Taken by itself, this view is not new, and has found expression in various strains of militant and aggressive Islamic movements that can trace their roots back to the words and actions of the Prophet Mohammed himself. It is also remarkable that such a view can also find immediate analogy to the Leninist-Stalinist dialectic of the Soviet Union which for the entire 70 years of its existence found itself “surrounded” by enemies in the capitalist world intent on destroying it. For Stalin, and those both preceded and followed him from the birth to the death of the Soviet Union, the world was also divided into a place of submission and an abode of war. Likewise, the only way to save the Communist state was through the spread of its ideology while closing all avenues of competing ideas off from the “protected” masses. Like radicalized

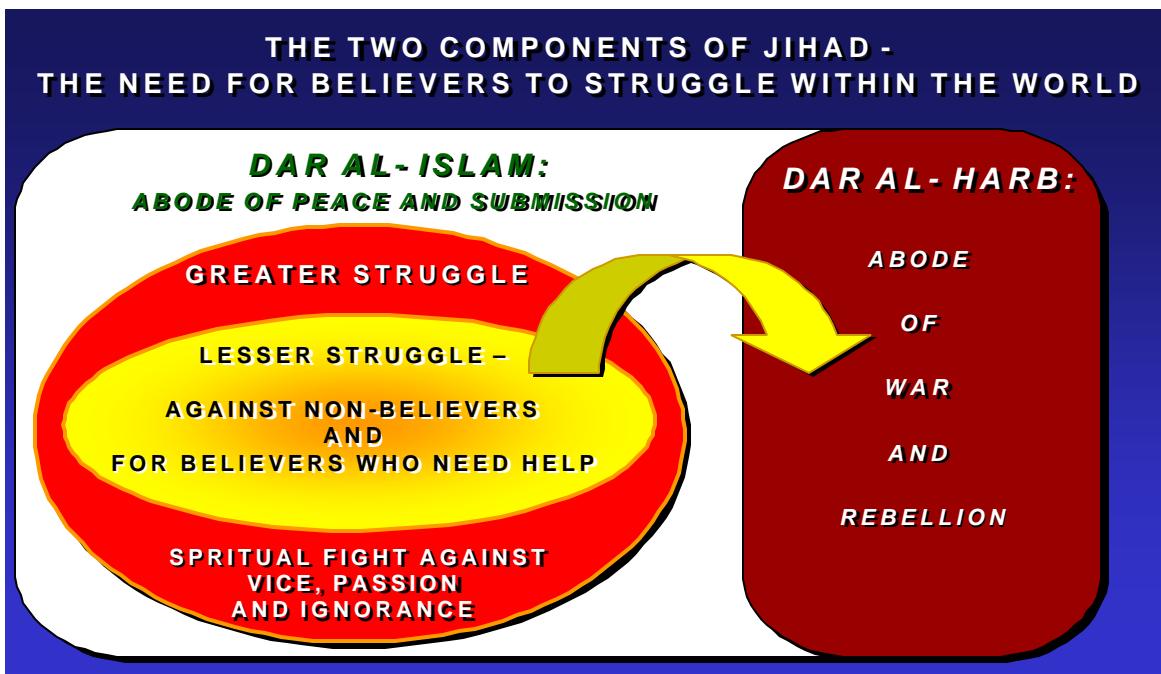


FIGURE 4: THE CONCEPT OF JIHAD WITHIN ISLAM

Islam makes a distinction between the “greater” form of *Jihad* or struggle, and the “lesser” form which is a subset of the Greater *Jihad*. The greater type is an inner struggle that individuals fight with themselves to resist temptations, vices, passions and ignorance of Islam. The lesser type is an outward showing of support to “fight” for or publicly struggle for causes which are worthy of Muslims to champion such as defense of other Believers who are oppressed or when a Muslim community comes under attack from non-Believers.

forms of Political Islam today, Soviet Communism sought to challenge the Western democracies through all means, to include the infiltration and control of their societies through the exploitation of the very means of the institutions which are the hallmark of democratic governance—free speech, popular elections and atomization of society. In the light of history, the actions of the Soviet Union in this respect were undertaken as a result of the realization by its leaders of the poverty of their belief system, not as a sign of its superiority. When matched on the level playing field of open ideas and unencumbered by polemical discourse, Soviet Communism as a catallaxical model failed because it could not provide the absolute degree of satisfaction demanded by those it sought to control when seen in comparison to a rival form of societal organization that was capable of meeting both basic and existential demands.

Within this paper, I have purposely made use of a number of economic terms and concepts as a means of analysis for Islam both as a system and an ideology. This point is

raised because Islam in some ways transcends the concept of religion in the sense that a majority adherents of Christianity or reformed Judaism in Western countries conceive of religion. Instead it contains the attributes which European Christian denominations were forced to discard in the wake of the Protestant Reformation and the subsequent emergence of the Westphalian states system over the past several hundred years. Indeed, an inverse correlation exists in terms of the rise of the state and the transfer of power and responsibility to it at the expense of the Church.

In effect, religion has been made to recede to the private and internalized spheres of life within much of the Western construct of the state. This recession has occurred not because religion in itself is incompatible with the secular state, but rather because the state has subsumed many of the supporting roles religious institutions previously assumed responsibility for. This has allowed religions within the secular democratic model to concentrate on its role as a means of expressing ethical and metaphysical relationships, a role which is still seen to have some degree of utility to the secular institutions of power and authority in the state for validating its moral conduct. In a wider sense however, the state grew in its ability and need to provide (or at least proclaim responsibility) for the increasing set of demands for satisfaction European, American and other societies that adopted the liberal secular state model made on it. Perhaps the greatest demand was the need to provide for a secure civil environment—a good that the religious sphere within the liberal secular state could not provide.

On the other hand, Arab and other societies where Islam predominates are still largely immune to the impact of state control, especially in terms of the wider rural and inner urban déclassé poor. In societies such as Egypt and Algeria (among others similar to them in outlook and possibilities) which have been said to have “failed,” one could argue that the state has not failed. To the contrary, it never got underway except for the thin tier of educated elites gathered near the top of its institutional apex left over from previous colonial administration or Western emulation which purport to control and guide the remainder of a largely indifferent underclass population. Instead, the majority of people have learned to exist by ignoring or avoiding the strictures and structures of the state—i.e. shun confrontations with the one apparatus of control and security the state must maintain, the police and military. Meanwhile the “quasi” state reciprocates by ignoring the needs of the teeming masses, not because it especially wishes to do so, but because it has little choice in terms of providing for the needs and wants of its citizenry. The state in most Islamic countries thereby conveniently foregoes its responsibilities in supporting improvements to its citizen’s lives—a set of tasks which is far beyond the capacities of the majority of Islamic states in any case.

Instead, the rural and urban poor have continued to exist largely in the way those of their class have done so for generations upon generations. At the heart of this existence is Islam. The difference now is that where the state cannot, will not, or is not able to assist and improve the lives of the masses, radicalized forms of Political Islam have stepped in by providing food for the hungry, medical care for the ill, education for the young, pride for poor, hope for those in despair, and ideology for those seeking direction. In this way radical—and even not so radical—Islam has been able to provide goods and services which in Western countries are considered the domain of the state. By providing these commodities they are meeting and supplying a demand and at the same time receiving loyalty in return.

In this way let us posit that support for political Islam is a function of its ability to provide needs, both tangible and intangible, to those whose demands cannot be met by the existing state system they live in. The following simple equation can be drawn to represent this concept therefore:

$$\text{Public Support} = \frac{\text{Demands}}{\text{Satisfaction}}$$

Wherein; when demands for goods or services are met, satisfaction is derived, thereby causing support to be given to whoever is able or willing to provide the good or service.

FIGURE 5: SUPPORT SATISFACTION EQUATION

The purpose of this equation is to show the relationship between public support or allegiance to a cause as being a function of public demands or wants being a product of the amount of personal satisfaction an individual derives from support to that cause. Thus if the state is not able to adequately provide a specific demand, say education for children, but another actor is able to supply that specific demand, say a religious based organization, then it follows that an individual degree of satisfaction is produced that in turn becomes expressed in terms of public support for the provider of that demand.

As shown above, certain Islamist organizations have been able to turn intangible feelings such as hope, support, and anger into tangible goods and services such as education, medical care and public safety within Islamic societies where state services have failed. If the Muslim *umma* is the macro market place, radical Islamists have found a niche for not only their views, but for the commodities they provide as well. For instance, if it is accepted that most Islamic state governments are unable to fulfill the needs, hopes and aspirations of their publics, those publics will search for other providers who are either willing or able to provide the demands they want or need. An inference can be drawn here which postulates that in places or countries

where social stability exists to a relatively high degree, and public satisfaction in terms of demands and wants are met as a function of that stability, the need for ideologies or movements to overthrow and replace the existing order which allows for the provision of that stability is correspondingly low.

Conversely, the opposite stands true for those states and societies which are incapable of providing the basic and absolute demands and wants of its members, therefore allowing entry of other actors which can provide any degree of satisfaction. In this way, radical Islamic movements have been able to capture Muslim societies at the grass root level for several generations, effectively displacing other models of social interaction. The way to counteract the further rise, and start the contraction of radical Islam within these societies therefore is to offer the publics meaningful choice so that they can dispense with the single reliance on the services radical Islamic movements provide by default due to the exit or lack of effective state involvement. Again, only through the state's reentrance into the market arena of public demands and meeting them with public goods and services will the rise of Political Islam be checked and eventually excised.²⁶

In much the same way the masses within communist societies were continually exhorted to labor for the good of the wider working class to defeat capitalism, so radical Islamist thinkers continually urge their followers to convert the inner struggle of their religious convictions into outward manifestations of resistance against the forces menacing Islam today. They can do this because no credible competitor exists to offer the Muslim masses a convincing choice. This analogy is mentioned because it provides important insights to the challenges that face both radical political Islam and those it seeks to oppose. As this paper continues its analysis of the sources of radical Islamic conduct, one can start to discern that the recent expansion of radical Islam as an ideology might in fact be a manifestation of inherent weaknesses rather than inherent strengths.

THE RISE OF POLITICAL ISLAM

“In short, the Islamist phenomenon is but one stage in the political modernization of Muslim countries.”

—Shireen T. Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West*²⁷

At the heart of radical Islamic movement's motivations is the need to gain, regain or maintain control over the mass of believers. To reach this goal modern Islamists look for inspiration not only to the Prophet Muhammad but to more recent messengers as well. For

politically motivated Islamists, the Egyptian writer and activist Sayyid Qutb (1903-1966) is revered as the intellectual grandfather of the modern transnational Muslim movements. In his most popular book, "Signposts on the Road" (1964), Mr. Qutb wrote in despairing terms about the influence Western modernity was having on traditional Islamic society: "This is the most dangerous *jahiliyya* which has ever menaced our faith. For everything around is *jahiliyya*: perceptions and beliefs, manners and morals, culture, art and literature, laws and regulations, including a good part of what we consider Islamic culture."

Although Qutb began his career as a literary critic, like many well to do young men who came to study in the West, he became disillusioned and was later radicalized by his stay in the United States between 1948 and 1950. In a book about his travels he cited the Kinsey Report, along with Darwin, Marx and Freud, as forces that have contributed to the moral degradation of both the West and Islam. Qutb, along with intellectuals such as Rashid Rida and Maulana Maudoodi who developed the notion that modern Western culture was equivalent to *jahiliyya*, and later helped the *Gamma Islamiya*—the Islamic Brotherhood grow into a major opposition to the secularizing initiatives and policies of the socialist President Gamel al-Nasser who made use of Pan-Arab nationalism to counter reactionary Islamic movements during his 20 years of rule. Individuals such as Qutb posed a true threat to the statist Arab rulers of the Cold War period because of their ability to fuse Arab nationalism with Islamic doctrine. For his constant incitement of resistance against Nasser's rule, Qutb was executed by the Egyptian authorities in 1966. However, Qutb's pan-Islamic views continue to excite and incite several generations of Arabs who shared his disgust with both the West and the local Arab leaders who appeared to dispense with Islam in favor of alien, secular ideas. As Fathi Yakan a student of Qutb in the early 1960's wrote:

"The groundwork for the French Revolution was laid by Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu; the Communist Revolution realized plans set by Marx, Engels and Lenin. . . . The same holds true for us as well in regards to Qutb."²⁸

This concept of a worthy struggle on behalf of one's belief in the unchanging Word of God has re-emerged after having found new means of expression in places where Islam has been seen as having come under attack. With a new awareness of fellow Muslims and Islamic culture vulnerable to change, young men became committed to Islam as an ideology of liberation during the years of the Cold War. Since Islam is a universalist belief system that transcends borders, boundaries and other societal distinctions, it is a requirement for true believers to support other Muslims whose faith is seen as being threatened gained new urgency

and meaning. Such threats took the form of overt conflicts such as those seen in the 1990's in Bosnia and later Kosovo where Islamic fighters, many having served in Afghanistan during the years of Soviet occupation, formed small bands to fight for supposed Muslim brothers. Others went to Chechnya, Somalia, southern Sudan, and Nigeria where Christians and other non-Muslims of various types found themselves being forced to accept Islamic strictures on their way of life. Others have sought to enter into a jihad in order to fight the encroachments that secular Western cultural aspects have made into traditional Islamic societies. Further types of armed or spiritual support as a form of *jihad* can be justified on the basis that Muslim populations, no matter their location in the world, must be assisted. Having said this, although *jihad* is a duty for every Muslim community, it is not necessarily meant for every individual. In this interpretation radical Islamists and clerics constantly view the Muslim world as being invaded and violated through Western, American and Zionist influences which they believe seek to destroy the fundamental patterns of Muslim beliefs and life.²⁹

As shown in simple context at figure 4 above, because the *dar al'Harb* is always present, Muslims are also expected to struggle openly against practices and beliefs they encounter if they must go to live in a non-Islamic society. It is also their duty to congregate and establish an umma wherever two or more are present. Hence the growth and expansion of Islam in almost every western country over the past 20 years as Muslims from around the world have migrated to Europe and North America order to live, work, (permanently) settle and establish institutions of worship. In fact, a spiritual struggle is taking place between these Muslims numbering in the many millions, now removed from the basis of their original cultures in North Africa, the Middle East and Asia due to their being exposed to secularizing influences daily and their fellow co-religionists who live in Muslim countries and are therefore more insulated from such influences. Seeing the presence of Muslim populations living abroad as a means of furthering their aims, numerous (and mostly radical) transnational Islamic organizations and groups have provided money and manpower to establish the many thousands of mosques and madrassas which now exist through the United States and Europe as means to offer the Islamic diaspora a means of connecting with their cultural roots. As seen from the events of 11 September 2001, a number of young Muslims living abroad in the West, seeing for themselves the dichotomy of material wealth and spiritual poverty that affects much of the developed world, who have become most vulnerable to the attractions of a politicized version of Islam which urges its followers to translate spiritual jihad into physical resistance to further secularization while they live and work in the West.

Further complicating the concept of *jihad* for the ordinary believer however is the question of how should Muslims living in a Islamic based society deal with non-Muslims who also live in their midst. Within the *Qur'an* distinction is repeatedly made between those non-Muslims who are either "People of the Book" -- the "*ahlu l-kitab*", and therefore accept the validity of the one true God either through the Judaic or Christian versions of Divine revelation, and those peoples who are considered to be without religion. Whereas the former have an accepted and at least partly shared scriptural foundation, the later—the "*kafirun*" are given or offered little sympathy. People of the Book need only to submit and accept Islamic rule and therefore are permitted continue to practice their beliefs—erroneous as they might be in the eyes of Muslims. However, non-believers in religion—atheists—are by strict *Qur'anic* interpretation left with few choices—either submit and convert, stay and face approbation and possibly death, or depart from Muslim society.³⁰

This shared affinity, and yet great division between the Abrahamic religions causes deep and sincere distress for devout Muslims since they find it hard to understand why, in the face of the Muhammadan revelations, Jews and Christians continue to reject the final messages sent by God in the *Qur'an*. In order to understand the overriding ideology which guides radical Islamist movements however, one must understand how completely the logic of their worldview colors their sense of rational thought. Again, the quartet of principles that guide Islamic society—legitimacy, orthodoxy, orthopraxy and historical tradition—must be recalled. For adherents of organizations such as *al-Qaeda* and *Hizbu'llah*, Islam provides answers, justification, and sanction for acts taken during *jihad*. Additionally, *jihad* offers a way for those who feel, or actually are dispossessed to take up a cause greater than themselves—and the fleeting if deadly intoxication societies have gained from going to war stands as proof to this.³¹ According to one *Hadith*, Mohammed was to have said that whoever fights to make Allah's word superior fights in God's cause and that even a single journey for this purpose is better than the world and everything in it.³² For all its promise for future rewards in paradise however, *jihad* is not one of the prerequisites of salvation as are the Five Pillars of Faith.³³ As such *jihad* ranks lower than the *hajj* which is obligatory only if a Muslim can find the resources to undertake it.³⁴

Although *jihad* is specifically abjured in terms of attempting to forcibly expand territory on behalf of the *umma*, Muslims none-the-less have a compulsory obligation to assist other believers when it comes to the defense of the wider Islamic world if a Muslim community comes under attack. But *Jihad* as a concept found a ready audience in the West as much as in the Muslim world during the period of Soviet intervention and occupation in Afghanistan (1979-89) where Afghan and other fighters from many Islamic countries made their way to the isolated

mountains of northern Pakistan where they were trained to go into “holy” combat against the atheist Soviet “infidel” and their Afghan puppet regime forces. In the Western popular press of the time, *jihad* was too easily translated into “holy war,” and therefore the *mujahedin* were lionized as “holy warriors” fighting America’s enemy. Unfortunately, the second and third order effects of this American support which included extensive military training and money transfers to numerous Afghan and foreign Islamic groups and organizations would have disastrous consequences once the Soviet incursion was defeated.³⁵

Aside from the militant interpretation, the essence of *jihad* refers to the obligation incumbent on all Muslims, both as individuals and as members of the wider community, to lead a virtuous life and struggle within oneself against baser instincts and activities. It also commits a Muslim to extend the Islamic *umma* through means of preaching, education and peaceful exhortations so that willing new converts might publicly recite the “*shahada*” and therefore join the *umma*. One of the main transgressions of radical Islamist groups such as *al-Qaeda* has been their misappropriation of the phrase and concept in their efforts to rouse other Muslims to fight for their cause—a recurring source of friction highly resented by moderate and traditional Islamic scholars and believers. Unfortunately, few Islamic leaders of importance have raised their voices loudly enough either to fellow Muslims or non-Muslims to offer a credible alternative to the intolerance expressed by radical Islamic movements.³⁶

THE EMERGENCE OF RADICAL ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS

“Islamic fundamentalism has given an aim and a form to the otherwise aimless and formless resentment and anger of the Muslim masses at the forces that have devalued their traditional values and, in the final analysis, robbed them of their beliefs, their aspirations, their dignity, and to an increasing extent even their livelihood.”

—Bernard Lewis, *The Roots of Muslim Rage*³⁷

Although many Muslims are horrified at the notion that their faith has and still is being used to justify terrorism, the advocacy of *jihad* against the West by Usama bin Laden and his supporters is a natural extension of a radical strain within Islamic intellectual thought since the 1930's when the first stirrings of anti-colonial sentiment in Muslim lands was able to mix with religious passion for the great masses of Islamic peoples. Led by secular, and largely Marxist inspired anti-colonial revolutionaries, the first wave of Islamic radicals who challenged British, French and later American control over Muslim countries were more nationalist than religious. Whether Sukarno in Indonesia, Jinnah of Pakistan, or Nasser in Egypt, these first wave leaders

found that nationalism would mean little to the masses if not fused with religion, but the model they used was not the traditional Islamic model of societal organization wherein Islam is given supremacy. Rather, it was their adoption (and radical adaptation) of what looked like the Western secular *statist* model that infuriated and further alienated the now dispossessed Islamic clerical class. Within segments of this group would rise the seeds of resentment and hatred against the secular state, and that hatred would be shared and passed down to the growing population of déclassé and displaced urban poor newly arrived from the rural periphery in countries such as Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, Pakistan, and Algeria. It would be a later generation that the crop of leaders and activists from these seeds would be gathered by influential radical Islamists.

Following on the first wave of nationalist leaders therefore, a second group arose, younger and closer to the ground of the land and societies they emerged from. For this generation, the rejection of Islamic tradition and the adoption of Western alien ways of dress, thought, and manners that raced through the Islamic World throughout the 1950's through the 1970's caused a reaction and disaffection against both leaders and the West by people such as Qutb. But a new generation of leaders like Omar Qadafi of Libya served to show what was possible, especially if the younger generation of Islamic activists included officers from the military. Fear of just such eventualities led to numerous purges within Arab armies throughout the 1950's, 60's and 70's. Seen as radicals, they were often jailed, tortured and often executed in their home countries, particularly in Egypt during the height of the Nasser years, for their attacks on Western influences and their efforts to replace their own regime with an Islamic state. Such extremist groups as members of Islamic Jihad, which assassinated Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat in 1981, left behind a 54-page document titled "The Neglected Duty" that provided an elaborate theological justification for what they had done. Addressed to other Muslims rather than to the West, the document drew on earlier thinkers in arguing that rebelling against one's rulers — which is forbidden under most cases in Islamic jurisprudence — is in fact a duty if those rulers have abandoned true Islam.³⁸

It is little surprise to note that the *al-Qaeda* movement merged with Islamic Jihad several years ago, and takes the same position in regards to many of the present rulers in the Islamic world. In presenting justification for such acts, *al-Qaeda* and radical Islamic clerics draw on medieval Muslim scholars to argue that the killing of innocents or even Muslims is permitted if it serves the greater good of a *jihad* against the West. Again, the world is divided into a good and evil comparison that equates the righteousness of combating evil outweighing any cost incurred.³⁹

Such a worldview is not new and dates back to a school in medieval Islam that spread throughout the Arab world in the 20th century, known as the *Salafiyya*, its name coming from the Arabic words “*al-salaf al-salih*”—“the venerable forefathers,” referring to the generation of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. The *Salafis* believed Islam had been corrupted by idolatry, and they sought to bring it back to the purity of its earliest days. Early *salafi* reformers were extreme in observance, but not necessarily militant. They also believed it was possible to reconcile Islam with modern Western political ideas, some arguing that Western-style democracy was perfectly compatible with Islam. For them Western democratic models had even been prefigured by the Islamic concept of *shura*, a consultation between rulers and those they ruled.⁴⁰ The influence of *salafi* thought is still very pronounced, having been adopted by the Wahabi sect of Saudi Arabia as a means of justifying the extreme puritanical forms of orthopraxy they demand.

ISLAMIC CONCEPTS OF THE STATE AND THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

Covenants should not be broken because one community feels stronger than another.

—Qur'an XVI:92⁴¹

The basis of Islamic legal and societal traditions including justification for *jihad* is contained in the *Qur'an*. As mentioned earlier, Islamic political thinking since the time of the Prophet has placed great stress on the notion of unity between believers, and conversely, great approbation on anything or anyone that might cause disunity between Muslims. With the dominant *Sunni* tradition based upon a decentralized interpretation of clerical authority, significant disagreements over the interpretation of various passages within the *Qur'an*, the *Hadith* and the *Sunna* have arisen since the time of the Prophet. It is evident that the world at the time of the final revelations of God to Muhammad was far from a unified community; many societies then existing were of course doing so without knowledge of the existence of others around the globe. Within the *Qur'an* however, according to Islamic tradition, God through Muhammad revealed His final plan for mankind. Whereas the original unity of mankind which started with Adam and Eve had broken apart through succeeding generations, Muslims look forward to the day when all peoples will be reunited into one community through the message contained within the *Qur'an*. In other words, Islam presupposes that eventually all people will eventually convert—or rather, as some Islamic scholars state, revert, since in their view all

humanity is a form of God's creation, everyone is endowed with the knowledge of God and is therefore capable of becoming Muslim.

These messianic visions contained within the *Qur'an* are further augmented by the definitive sayings of Muhammad as recorded in the *Hadith* which is second only to the *Qur'an* in importance to Muslims. Whereas the *Qur'an* provides the major and unchangeable guidelines of Islam, it is the collected sayings of Muhammad that give specific details on how one can and must live as a Muslim.⁴² It is this totally contained sense of confidence in the eventual fulfillment of the teachings contained within the revealed words given to Muhammad and then shared by him for the rest of the world that acts as a guiding ideology for present day radical Islamic clerics and their followers.

Convinced in the inevitable outcome of their faith, such religious leaders are able to provide tautological answers to those who seek to believe without question. According to such fundamental Islamic teachings, the difference in beliefs and religions around the world is only of temporary consequence since in the wider range of history each people had previously been sent a prophet throughout past times. Such prophets were commissioned to declare to their individual peoples the divine law as spoken then, constituting in effect a separate covenant between God and each particular people. Thus, although God had revealed His will to Moses and the earlier Hebrew prophets, and later to Jesus, Muhammad through his revelations discerned that the Scriptures of the Jews—the Torah (itself otherwise known as The Law), and that of the Christian community through the Gospels, had in fact become corrupted because of the inclusion of what Muslims believe to be human made fabrications and falsehoods.⁴³ As with so many other concepts within Islam, parallels exist with this view for present day Islamic communities as well, a point that radical Islamic scholars tend to point out repeatedly.

It is clear that central to Muhammad's efforts and legacy, was his struggle to establish his vision of God's rule on Earth. This was especially true during the *Hijaz* Period (622 - 632 AD/CE). During this period Mohammed defined the community of believers who had made the proper submission to the will and precepts of God as a distinct community or *umma* in contrast from the rest of all peoples".⁴⁴ In such a community, all loyalties, whether tribal, ethnic, or associative had to be superseded by a new brotherhood of submission and belief as evidenced by the term *Islam*.⁴⁵ Within the *Qur'an* reference is repeatedly made to those who submit to the will of God as being of a distinct and specially privileged nation, and again the term *umma* is used to distinguish the common obligations and shared beliefs which set believers apart from other peoples. This conception of the *umma* or brotherhood constitutes the basis of the worldwide pan-Islamic community whose membership alone serves as a path to both success in

this world and salvation in the next for believers. For all the concern shown in the Qur'an regarding the umma or community of believers, there is no word which translates to "the state". Instead membership within the umma was all that believers needed.

Building on this concept of membership within a greater and overriding community of believers, Muslim scholars and jurists, since the time of Muhammad, have repeatedly asserted that the basis of human existence can only be accomplished through communal association. By extension therefore, no one can live outside the bounds of society. Writing in the early 1950's the distinguished Professor of Middle East Studies at the time for Johns Hopkins University, Majid Khadduri offered the following scholarly view of their communitarian vision of Islam,

"...Taken in the context of Muhammad's time and place of life—and even up to the present—it can be argued that no one could exist under such conditions in the Arabian Desert unless they did so as a member of a wider community. Expulsion from the community and into the harsh wilderness surrounding the community would certainly be a sentence of death. As such the individual's rights and obligations have been defined in terms which subordinate them to the needs and interests of the larger community, and this subordination to superior authority acknowledged as representing the wider community has been a hallmark of Islamic societies ever since."⁴⁶

This is not to say that the Muhammadan vision of communitarian obligations is not without precedent. Indeed, it mirrored both the earlier Aristotelian Hellenic concept of citizenship as well later Roman philosophical interpretations of civic responsibilities. More directly, the Prophet in his time, and those who followed him, realized that the harsh realities of life as it existed in the barren Arabian lands required people not only to rely on each other, but subordinate their own interests and individual needs to the larger group in order to ensure both personal and communal survival.⁴⁷

Later Islamic scholars such as Abu Nasr al-Farabi (870-950 AD/CE) would succinctly state such a circumstance in the following terms, "By his very nature man is not equipped to attain all that is necessary for his needs without the help of others...If man is ever to achieve the perfection of his nature, he must belong to society (*qawm*) and cooperate with his fellowmen."⁴⁸ Society therefore is regarded as indispensable for the survival of the individual as well as being inherent in the Islamic concept of authority. Again to quote Professor Khadduri..."In the Islamic view of society, humanity cannot survive without authority, for although man is conceived as a social animal by nature, man is not a well-behaved animal. For the Muslim believer, the only true restraints which exist to regulate humanity's social relations and counter the negative

propensities that individualism entails are those restraints which are imposed by law and enforced by authority.”⁴⁹

Accordingly, a hierarchical model of Islamic “state” authority arose out of necessity, responsible for containing the aggressive and malevolent tendencies of people which if allowed to go unrestrained would destroy the wider society. In this respect, Islam as a political ideology finds its truest expression as one of the most conservative belief systems in existence extending legitimacy to those in power in order that the greater good be accomplished for the greatest number. Contrary to its democratic pretensions, the political implications of Islam developed into a rigid hierarchical social system enforced by the authority of those in power.

Islam also owes much to the local conditions and times its political rulers found themselves, freely borrowing from autocratic Persian, Greek, Roman and indigenous tribal leadership models as rulers consolidated personal power during the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mogul empires. Such syncretic influences are still visible within the state structures of Arab governments today, where family and tribal connections to those in positions of influence serve people better than reliance on a blind and unresponsive bureaucracy. Much like the social contract theories of Thomas Hobbes, an inherent notion within Islamic political philosophy is the assumption that man is by nature evil and therefore must be compelled to surrender a part of his individual liberty to superior authority in order to protect the rest of society. Radical Islamist movements such as the *Taliban* of Afghanistan or the *Gamma Islamiya* of Egypt base their claim to authority over believers from this deep and penetrating root of presumed authority, one that claims to act to protect the ruled as long as those who are forced to endure such rule do not object.

Such a view of course runs counter, and in sharp contrast to the modern secular Western view of the state and the individual. This is the critical point of departure from Western, and in particular American, views of the individual, which sees persons being endowed with autonomous rights which largely overrule communal obligations, including ones based on religious sensibilities. It is clear that when *al-Qaeda*, the *Taliban* and other radical Islamist movements speak about the authority of the state, their concept of the state is that of Islam. There is no room for secular elements because there is no need for secular influences.

Here is the point of great departure, for whereas the Islamic concept of society stresses the requirement of the individual to submit to the needs of the state and the greater community (and ideally under Islam both are the same), the Western secular concept of society stands in opposition to such a view, separating famously as in the American model, the distinction between church and state. As such, the Western liberal model requires the needs of the state

and the greater community to be subordinated to the needs and rights of the individual. Indeed, the law can be questioned and challenged and overturned by the individual if justified—a concept that is alien and threatening to a divinely inspired, and therefore unchanging concept of law that finds its expression in the degree of control it must exercise over individuals who can operate only within narrowly allowed spheres.⁵⁰

It is interesting to note that although within the *Qur'an* the term "*umma*" is used repeatedly, the Arabic word for state is not to be found, for community or brotherhood are concepts which encompass both society and state; authority and obligations. Both radical Islamist and even Marxist scholars contend that one of the impacts of the Western colonizing period over Islamic territories was the artificial division of the *umma* into falsely created boundaries which served to divide the Islamic community from within. In this cause, radical Islamists claim that European Imperialist designs were aided and abetted by corrupt local dynasties and appointed rulers who served to the benefit of European, and later by extension, American political and economic interests.⁵¹ By so doing, they lost the Islamic mandate and forfeited their right to rule in the minds of radical clerics.

In terms of understanding Islamic law according to Islamist thinkers, if one accepts the notion that there is no separation between religion and state, there is no need for "civil" law, for to them, such a notion is a Western, and therefore alien, construct. Again, Islamists contend that the imposition of Western based civil codes by colonial powers was one more way in which the Euro-American powers hoped to maintain control over the *umma* through indirect ways.⁵² Since the foundation of *Shari'a* is based on the word of God, Islamists reason, it cannot be up to humans to attempt to change its nature or effects. This explains why punishments considered inhumane by Western standards such as stoning, beheading and amputation are penalties still invoked by Islamic clerics as being valid and warranted because they still fulfill the commandments set forth in the *Qur'an*. To them, God's word is unchangeable and governs for all time.

This belief system also clarifies why the classical Arabic of the *Qur'an* cannot be changed, updated or reinterpreted or translated – any such edition which seeks to do so cannot and will not be considered an authentic rendering of the Divine word enclosed with the Book. Arabic was the language of the final Divine Revelations and to understand the import of those revelations, the "*kithab al-Allah*" can only be studied, learned and expressed in those words as well. Hence, education in terms of learning the *Qur'an* in the original Arabic as a unifying element is of great importance to the creation and maintenance of the pan-Islamic commonwealth as proposed by radical Islamist theorists.

TERRORISM AS BOTH VEHICLE AND MEDIUM FOR RADICAL ISLAMIC GOALS

“History unfortunately recognizes and accords visibility to power, not to weakness... (the voices of the weak) are heard, yes, but only when the dominant power suffers, only when resistance has a semblance of costing, of exacting a price...”

—Eqbal Ahmad: Terrorism: Theirs and Ours⁵³

It has only become apparent within the past year following the attacks upon the United States by supporters of a radical Islamist view of the world, that the traditional forms and concept of deterrence which worked during the Cold War years have little utility when applied to threats posed by non-state actors such as al-Qaeda. This is especially true when the challenge is presented by those who are guided by a religiously based cultural vision that lies outside the parameters of the prevailing Western, and by extension, world view of international order. Therefore, the previously assumed paradigm of international relations, based on traditional notions of deterrence has changed and needs to be modified and expanded to include methods of deterring radical transnational non-state actors. Indeed, the “War on Terrorism” is an inaccurate name for the conflict the United States is engaged in and has pledged to fight since terrorism is only one of many means by which a group attempting to challenge or defeat an existing order undertakes such an endeavor. The war America finds itself in is a conflict against a collectivist ideology that makes use of a religion as a means of attaining and maintaining power. At the apex of this conflict are transnational stateless actors which are consists of movements, networks and individuals. As a result, the misnomer of a “War on Terrorism” does not allow the public to focus fully on what the nature of the threat truly is, nor on who is the real enemy.

Although the term “terrorism” is defined by the U.S. Department of State as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience,”⁵⁴ terrorism committed by al-Qaeda and other “terrorist” groups is not an end in itself. Instead, it is only one of the means by which the United States, and by extension, those forces that oppose the advance of radical Islam can come under assault. One current writer on the subject includes groups or individuals whose activities span more than one state or whose members are citizens of two or more states in her definition of “international” terrorists.⁵⁵

One little analyzed aspect of the 11 September 2001 attacks is that transnational stateless organizations such as *al-Qaeda* might actually be conducting their own form of asymmetrical deterrence based on a particular—if faulty—view of what the actions and responses of the target audience and country they attack will be. In other words, radical transnational groups seeking to challenge, defy or destroy an existing part of the international order may be making use of means of terror in order to modify the behavior of their adversary. This is not to say they do not wish to inflict pain and punishment on their adversaries, for that certainly is a desired outcome from their perspective; but in addition, as a way of being “heard” to use Eqbal Ahmad’s term. In the case of the United States and *al-Qaeda*, the message Osama bin-Laden has been sending at least from the early 1990’s is clear—stop all support for Israel as well as withdraw troops and influence from the rest of the Middle East otherwise further pain and punishment will be forthcoming to targets the United States as a nation holds in high value.⁵⁶

This leads one to conclude that a parallel, non-statist construct of societal organization exists in the minds of those who lead and actively support *al-Qaeda*. Going back to the original Islamic worldview presented in Figure 2, the Western construct of the secular state is illegitimate in the minds of radical Islamists. What is more, according to their interpretation of *Qur’anic* law, only Islamic forces can control Islamic societies. Unlike the earlier Cold War Communist-Capitalist confrontation, coexistence with non-Islamic societies is not an option for such radically inclined Islamists, since such coexistence allows for the possibility that Islamic societies will continue to be contaminated and corrupted through contact with non-Islamic political, social and cultural influences. When Sayyid Qutb stated, “Islam cannot accept any mixing with *Jahiliyyah*. Either Islam will remain, or *Jahiliyyah*; no half-half situation is possible...” he was writing for an audience that did not shrink from such a message. Instead, they rejoiced in it, both when he wrote it some 40 years ago, and for those who read it today in order to gain inspiration for their cause.⁵⁷

Additionally, acknowledgement that non-Islamic religious and cultural values have a right to exist on an equal par with Islamic ones undermines radical Islamist’s view of the validity of the *Qur’anic* revelations being the final and binding words of God. In their polemic, if allowed to compete with Islamic precepts, some vulnerable believers will inevitably be sent down the wrong path as so many have done in the past, thus inevitably leading to an undermining of the total societal control mechanisms such a religious based ideology presupposes. The conclusion one is forced to reach then is that conflict between the *radical* Islamic and non-Islamic worlds will continue at cultural and political fault lines. Complicating this situation is the fact that due to globalization many millions of Muslims are now living and firmly rooted within Western countries.

Although exposed to the effects of liberal secular societies, many Muslims have remained resistant to absorption into the wider non-Islamic culture they live amongst in terms of marrying outside of their own particular ethnic and religious groupings. As such, many Muslims who live in non-Islamic countries continue to have divided loyalties in terms of having to undertake the actions needed to support their beliefs while at the same time making those accommodations necessary to live within a non-Muslim society. Those Muslims who find difficulty in adjusting to Western patterns of social conduct remain susceptible to pan-Islamic appeals of solidarity promoted by radical organizations and groups whose goal is the elimination of secular non-Islamic societies.

As such, radical transnational Islamic organizations which seek to change the nature of the societies they find themselves in confrontation with also see the limits of conflict differently from that of secular based Western norms. Henry Kissinger in one of his seminal works written at the height of the Cold War noted that the difference between international actors that subscribe to an existing “legitimate” system, and those actors that reject the existing system, lies in the fact that the latter seek to overthrow the existing order, not to adjust it. Therefore, Kissinger concludes, such actors have little interest in limiting the scope of conflict.⁵⁸

It is apparent that the United States is engaged in a conflict with an ideology which finds legitimacy through religious beliefs and thus rejects the legitimacy of the current secular international order. Therefore, the same forms of deterrence and response which worked against states which sought and might still seek to challenge the vital interests of the United States will not work against transnational stateless actors which operate in the hidden societal recesses of the current international states system.

A TRANSCENDENT CONFLICT

“So much for the ends to be pursued in war; let us now turn to the means. There is only one: combat.”

—Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*⁵⁹

If Clausewitz’s dictum still has relevance today in our current war against extremist Islamic groups, then we must consider carefully the form and nature that combat takes. Whereas earlier global conflicts saw states making use of ideologies in order to wage war against adversaries in unambiguous and definable terms, the present war is one in which America finds itself fighting an ideology that is difficult to define and ambiguous in action because it surrounds

itself with the garments of one of the world's major religions. As a result, such an adversary is capable of using the assets and attributes of states while at the same time disguising itself in benign and almost untouchable ways as a religion while at the same time attempting to undermine the foundations of the state it exists in. Although *al-Qaeda* is the most visible champion of a radical and utopian vision of Islam that sees the secular liberalism of the West as the embodiment of evil, numerous other Islamic based organizations share its polemical views. More troublesome is the underswell of latent support which such organizations receive for carrying on a conflict with the West, and in particular the United States, from the Arab and Muslim "street", let alone "basement" to make use of Thomas Friedman's evocative description of public sentiment throughout the Islamic world.⁶⁰

Such a conflict therefore transcends conventional Western notions of war and combat carried out between states, if only because the United States is not at war with another state *per se*. Rather, it finds itself battling a religious ideology that purports to speak for the over one-sixth of humankind that practice Islam. Through the use of asymmetrical means of conflict, radical Islamic transnational non-state actors such as *al-Qaeda*, *Hamas*, and *Hizbu'llah* have succeeded in carrying conflict beyond traditional Western concepts of deterrence which worked well enough during the Cold War but now have little effect on them. By so doing, organizations and actors such as these have been able to plan and execute attacks through terrorist and non-conventional means.

"Classical" means of deterrence—which work under the assumption that states recognize the limits and consequences of their actions *vis-à-vis* each other and understand the attendant costs of those actions in terms of explicit punishment which are the consequence of violating those limits—has failed to dissuade transnational non-state actors from attacking targets which are considered excluded from attack under accepted conventions of international law. With no penalty to pay in terms of loss of land, population and economic infrastructure, radical Islamic transnational and stateless actors as those mentioned above have little or nothing to lose. Indeed by encouraging retaliation by the United States or other countries with the means of overwhelming destructive military retribution such as Israel *vis-à-vis* the Palestinians or Russia in regards to the Chechens, radical Islamists look forward to massive reprisals that will hit and affect the wider Islamic communities they hide within, thereby causing feelings of revenge to be adopted by innocent civilians whom come under attack during such reprisals. By operating outside of the structures of a recognized state as defined by Western secular models, these transnational actors and organizations are not restrained by the accepted norms of international behavior and responsibilities which states are subject, and usually adhere to. Such conduct

also performs the role of providing a perverse sense of ideological consistency since they can operate outside of Western established rules of state behavior while making use of the advantages afforded to them by operating within the framework of a state.

Through the use of Islam as an ideology, and their ability to find entrée or infiltrate, the presence of radical Islamic individuals and groups has the potential to become largely unconstrained on a worldwide scale wherever Muslim communities exist. This is not an overgeneralization, for radical Islamic transnational actors have learned to operate beyond the usual levers of state control while making use of the civil structures of the states they exist in. This also has served to make traditional forms of containment and deterrence ineffective against them. In effect, many of these organizations have perfected the means to be able to have their operatives recede into hiding places within the larger space of Islamic societies and communities from whence they came without conceding defeat even after having suffered seemingly crushing losses. Even with the loss of the lives of those who carry out an attack using terrorist means, the important thing to the Islamist group is that the attack was accomplished, and that some degree of pain was inflicted on the targeted enemy.

STRUCTURAL REDUCTION OF RELIGIOUS BASED IDEOLOGY

“Islam as an ideology has not been immune to the effects and consequences of the dialectics of challenge and resistance, which unleash a process of mutual transformation and accommodation.”

— Shireen Hunter, The Future of Islam and the West p.64⁶¹

The preceding analysis focused on the nature and causes of the threat facing the United States and its allies. In fighting such a threat, two parallel lines of operation need to be accomplished. One is short term and will involve the day-to-day finding, fixing and fighting of enemies by military and other interagency forces in order to prevent radical politically motivated Islamic groups and movements from using terror as a means to inflict pain on the United States and its partners. In most ways, the United States and its partners in the Global War on Terrorism are already fully engaged in carrying out the various activities required to reach and achieve decisive points that will defeat these movements tactically. However, although such activities might be successful in thwarting attacks and capturing key operatives, they will do little to defeat the underlying ideology which will still influence a more or less captive Muslim community of believers. Instead, the second, and much more ambitious line of operation goes

to the heart of understanding the center of gravity which allows radical Islamic groups to exist in the first place.

Going back to the Islamic world view of the nature of a state, the goal must be to change the parameters of the existing Islamic state to conform with secular models that stress competition of ideas and beliefs. Recognizing that radical Islamist groups and ideologies have been allowed to grow and thrive in conditions because weak state institutions could not contain or compete with the religious based radical organizations abilities to usurp and assume the prerogatives and responsibilities of the state. Again, it is these organizations' ability to thrive in countries which have weak and ineffective state institutions at all levels that have allowed them to act as substitutes for legitimate state social, security and administrative functions. If the strength of these organizations is derived from their ability to supplant or substitute ineffective secular state institutions, then the opposite should hold true if effective state institutions and administration were to be introduced. The model shown at figure 3, if supported with the appropriate degree of resources by the national elements of power of the United States and other secular democracies, could be established in one country at a time by extending aid and assistance to governments as they find the benefits of transitioning from one model to the other. As the civil populace comes to realize that the governmental structures are capable of providing goods, services, security and opportunity, the need for radical Islamist ideology will begin to subside and a new de-politicized form of Islam responsible for the spiritual concerns of citizens rather than temporal power should emerge.

As Samuel Huntington noted in his "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, "global politics has become multipolar and multicivilizational" for the first time in history.⁶² The global political realignment, which has been occurring since 1990, has seen a substitution of cultural and religious identity for the previous simplistic ideological allegiance required by countries and peoples that existed during the Cold War period.⁶³ The radical Islamic movements which have risen to challenge the United States realize that the previous deterrence regime does not apply to them and therefore are willing to pursue aggressive acts in order to make the United States "comply." The counter challenge that the United States and those governments under threat from such groups can pose is to make them irrelevant in the lives of the people they seek to speak for, and act on behalf of. This can only be done if the vast majority of Muslim populations presently living in countries and locations where the apparatus of positivist government has ceased to work is restarted and are thus given the chance for choice in their lives.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

"The tendency to introduce a religious element into politics, on the international no less than on the domestic plane, can be very dangerous indeed. For religion—perhaps any form of ideology...gravely disturb(s) the operation of a system of law which is in the main the product of custom and convention."

—Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*⁶⁴

The challenges and decisions presently facing the United States as it faces choices as to how to best pursue and defeat this threat are immense. It stands alone as the only nation with true global reach and commensurate economic, military, human, political and technological strength to back up its national will with the elements of national power. Yet at the same time the United States finds itself faced with challenges that cannot be solved simply in terms of the application of that power even in its different forms. Since the conclusion of the Cold War, it has become increasingly challenged and perplexed by the paradox of possessing tremendous degrees of power whereby it is expected to do everything as a nation by its partners, and yet is hampered from when it pursues unilateral policies it considers to be in its national interest by those same partners and allies as well as by adversaries. Although most powerful in absolute terms in comparison with other nations and groupings, it is able to afford only a portion of what is required to maintain a benign balance of power and stability throughout the world. In the context of the new Global War it finds itself in, the United States has also discovered it is under attack because it is the defender by default of a system—that of liberal secular democracy—and as such finds itself at odds with the last great collectivist ideology remaining, that of a radicalized form of Political Islam.

In times before the teachings of the Prophet and the message of the *Qur'an* could be questioned by members of Islamic societies, the ideological reasons for Islam's inherent control over all facets of life in Muslim communities was reassuring and needed by believers. This was especially true in light of the places and forms those societies took that minimized reliance on individual choice and maximized the need for collective action and response. With the globalization of business, access to information, industrialization, economic development, and technological progress that rely on, and requires individual choice, conflicting sources of influence have reached previously impenetrable Islamic societies that challenges the traditional visions and keepers of Islamic order and legitimacy. The advance of Western and particularly American secular values and cultural identification, have led to a clash of social and cultural values around the world, but none so completely as experienced within Islam. To a large

extent, the emergence and enlargement of this clash has been the result of a reaction against perceived Western secular values by a small though vocal minority of politically motivated Islamic clerics living both within and outside of the traditional Muslim world. It is they who have given shape to the differences inherent in both Muslim and Western societies as being a conflict between Western Modernity and Islamic Traditionalism.

In themselves, the views of these clerics and would be political leaders might be dismissed both within the Muslim and Western worlds. However, they have gained political power and voice through movements which give voice to an underlying swell of resentment and powerlessness within the underclass of many Muslim countries. So loud is that voice now, that governing elites of many Muslim countries have made use of scores of the populist views of such groups in order to either co-opt or out-maneuver them. In this respect, by offering voice and legitimacy to politically motivated clerics and their followers, secularly organized governments throughout the Islamic world are provided moral sustenance without having to initiate reforms that would lead to the hallmarks of Western Democracies—individual choice and opportunity—and eventually their demise. Add to this the adroit use of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to further alienate Arab and Muslim societies from the West by radical elements of Political Islam, and a small minority within Islam have succeeded in bending a religion into a political tool that uses social, economic, military, and informational compartments as means to emerge and then recede into the body of Islamic societies. In this way, radical political movements are able to make use of ostensibly separate armed auxiliary wings whose roles are to attack susceptible targets both in the West and within the Muslim world that disagree with the philosophy and direction these radical movements espouse.

Strategies that seek to combat radical Islam as an ideology must go past the eventually futile exercise of blunting only terrorism, for terrorism is merely the means by which ends are hoped to be gained by those who employ it. The issue is not simply one of fighting terrorism. Rather, it must be to eliminate or at least ameliorate the conditions which cause individuals and groups to turn to groups and organizations that promote and justify terrorism in the first place. Strategies must focus on why people have embraced radical Islam as an ideology, and then attempt to find ways by which supporters will reject and discard the underlying assumptions which underpin it. To be coherent and meaningful, a strategy must establish lines of operations which address those spheres of activity Muslim populations are desperate to receive help in.

In summary, radical Islamists have become the new threat to Western secular views of liberal and pluralist democracy because:

- They have transformed Islam from a religion into an ideology by their ability to exploit the totality of its worldview and its populist message in a market place where little opposition was given to their views.
- Through Islam, they have been successful in expressing rage, articulating discontent, and at least partly fulfilling the aspirations of déclassé masses in Muslim countries whose state institutions have either failed or never worked to start with.
- They are not afraid to challenge the traditional religious and political elites of Islamic societies as they vie for power and leadership as they portray these elites as being controlled by Western and American interests, thereby undermining the legitimacy of existing regimes.
- They have succeeded in portraying themselves as the defenders of Muslims world-wide by challenging the spread and dominance of American global capitalism and liberal secular democracy which has confronted traditional Islamic cultural spheres previously excluded from Western influence.
- They have increasingly transcended conventional models of state-based power and conduct, while at the same time been able to take advantage of state sanctioned institutions to increase the scope of their operations unlike previous challengers to liberal secular democracy.
- They purposely have gone to places ignored or not thought to be important or vital to Western interests such as Afghanistan, Pakistan or the urban ghettos of both North America and Europe, recruiting and training new generations of activists ready to continue the fight even after the current generation of leaders are gone.
- Being both religion and ideology, radical Islam has been able to recede and hide within religious structures which have usually been immune from control by liberal secular democracies and therefore able to still project its ideology to sympathizers.

The way forward for the United States and its allies and partners is to identify and then meet the challenges listed in this short paper in the following ways:

- Engage more, not less with the peoples of the Muslim world, to include the continued enlargement of the Western system of values which accepts Islam as a reality in the lives of people. Nothing less than the restoration of Islam as a religion rather than a political movement is at stake.

- Arcs of conflict caused by economic dislocation and disparities need to be addressed and remedied to include an equitable distribution of resources and wealth that members of Muslim societies are entitled to. Most importantly, the transition to pluralist and secular state systems from closed religious based world views must be encouraged, accelerated, and resourced.
- Traditional religious and societal elites that seek to retain a monopoly of control over Muslim societies should be challenged through new leaders who are ready and capable of offering people choice. Critical to the success of such a vision is the possibility that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be ameliorated through the establishment of strong, and responsive state administrative structures independent from Israeli control that can provide the necessary services, opportunities and security needed and demanded by the Palestinian public.
- Continue the progress made since 11 September 2001 in the application of new technologies, procedures and legal initiatives that have been introduced to wrest and maintain the advantage over adversaries antagonistic to secular models of liberal, participatory democracy through the use of all elements of national power by Western nations. Work with key allies and partners on these steps.
- Encourage from within the transformation of Islam from political ideology to spiritual faith through a policy of “structural reduction” of religious based ideology wherein the state reasserts its role as the primary provider and arbiter for societal needs and wants by retaking control of critical social spheres such as education, welfare distribution, health provision and public safety from radical Islamic organizations
- Enlist and encourage in every manner those voices and leaders of moderation to serve as models for the next generation of Muslims both in Islamic countries and in those new places Muslims live so that Islam becomes compatible with the fundamental precepts of secular pluralist societies. An investment of perhaps \$10 billion over several years by the United States through its Agency for International Development in a number of “at risk” countries in order to pay for the training of teachers as well as the building and equipping of schools established and run by secular state authorities is one which could pay high dividends. If nothing else, helping countries such as Pakistan re-establish a properly run state educational system which would then offer parents a choice of education for their children is an investment which could pay dividends in terms of providing a wider and more balanced education for an entire generation of Muslim youth in places which presently have been surrendered to the opponents of modernity and

choice. In the very least, it might offer clear testimony to refute the assertion that America does not care about the youth of the Muslim world.

These recommendations are far from comprehensive, but in general terms they provide concrete ways the secular pluralist state model might be initiated within Islamic countries in order to isolate and eliminate radical Islamist adversaries. Presently, the task of neutralizing Islam as a political ideology might seem too large and ambitious to be realized, but other similar if not greater challenges faced the United States in living memory. What is at stake is no more daunting, though no less possible than the defeat of the previous ideology which threatened the core values of pluralist democracies, that of the Soviet communist system and the ideology it fed on.

The Soviet empire collapsed not because its ideology became any mellower with age—Soviet communist dogma stayed as strident against capitalism until the very last gasp of its control over public information in the former U.S.S.R. and its satellite states. Soviet Communism fell because its citizens wanted out of a system which denied them the perceived advantages they saw their counterparts living in the West were enjoying under a system that offered the means to attain personal satisfaction by ways unavailable and unattainable by the system they were forced to live under. This is the most basic and enduring reason people rise up to change the direction and nature of their societies.

Turning this analysis to the way forward in combating radical Islamic movements which seek to overturn and destroy the existing world order, a rough analogy must be made between the way communism as an ideology was defeated—it became superfluous and an inhibitor to the further progressive development of the people who were forced to live under it. It will be in this fashion that this latest struggle the West finds itself engaged in will be resolved—when those who are forced to live under the most pernicious aspects of radical Islamic rule realize that they have a choice not to do so.⁶⁵

This worldwide conflict that America is engaged in is a struggle between ideas whose competing visions of how society and humanity should exist are at stake. For much the same reasons the previous global struggles of the past 100 years were fought and won, the United States must fight and win this latest conflict which challenges its national interests and values. As this is a war between conflicting and competing ideologies—one collectivist and controlled, the other individualist and liberal, this must be a war that must be won more through the superiority of ideals and visions for humanity than by the strength of the contenders military might, for it is a collision of ideas as much as it is of arms.

The end of this struggle will not be accomplished simply through the defeat of those movements and their leaders whose goal is the destruction of the United States and the establishment of a supposed Islamic world order. Rather, it will be reached when ideologies based on intolerance and violence are rejected by those they seek to represent and control and replaced by beliefs which encourage tolerance and peace.

WORD COUNT = 15,704

ENDNOTES

1 Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, (trans. and ed.) *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, New Edition With Revised Translation and Commentary, Amana Corporation Publishers, Brentwood, MD 1993, p. 220. (Hereafter referred to as Quran, Ali (ed.)). This edition is usually considered the definitive English language translation of the Qur'an.

2 The Qur'an lexically means "reading" or "recitation" in Arabic. It is also known as the "Kitab al-Allah" or the text or writing, i.e. The Book of God. See Quran, Ali (ed.), p. xi-xiii.

3 The Bisma'llah (translated as "Invocation to God") is one of the most beautiful and fervent prayers ever written and is an invocation that all followers within the Abrahamic religions can say and believe. It is invoked by devout Muslims before undertaking an activity of pronouncement of importance. "In the name of God, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful, praise belongs to God, the Sustaining Lord of all the Worlds." (See Haleem, *Understanding the Qur'an*, p 15-21, and Eaton, *Islam and the Destiny of Man*, p. 84-85.)

4 His full patronymic name was Muhammad *ibn* (son of) Abdullah. See Esposito, John L., *Islam – The Straight Path*, 1988 p. 12, and Eaton, Charles, *Islam and the Destiny of Man*, Albany 1985 p.100.

5 The Muslim theological view accepts the life and acts of Jesus (who in the Qur'an is referred to by the Arabic equivalent, *Isa*). The great point of departure is the Christian claim of Jesus' Divinity which runs totally counter to the Islamic concept of the Oneness of God. To Muslims, the later followers of Jesus misquoted him as proclaiming himself to be the "Son of God" rather than simply the "Servant of God", by which he shares the title of being a prophet along with Muhammad and earlier divinely inspired messengers.

6 Esposito, John L., *Islam – The Straight Path*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, p.13-15.

7 The name Allah is a later Arabic literal translation of the Hebrew *Yaweh*, the ancient Hebraic tetragrammaton of *Ya* being cognitive to the Classic Arabic 'A, and *Weh* being cognitive to the Arabic double // diphthong. Therefore, *Yaweh* and *Allah* are entomologically the same word.

8 Eaton, Charles Le Gai. *Islam and the Destiny of Man*. Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1985 p. 78-79.

9 Barry, Norman P., *Hayek's Social and Economic Philosophy*, London, MacMillan Press, 1979, p. 45. The term itself is taken form the Greek stem for exchanges between beings. I use the vernacular developed by the great Austrian economist Friedrich von Hayek who used the term to emphasize the difference between economic markets which he saw as being too circumscribed as a term, and the totality of interests and purposes needed to fulfill human existence.

10 Although the number of countries that describe themselves as Islamic Republics or States in their official names is relatively small, 45 countries belong to the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Most of these countries make extensive use of Islamic imagery and colors

in their national flags and symbols, as well as specifying Islam as the official creed within their legal systems.

11 Yahiya Emerick, *What Islam is All About*, International Books and Tapes Supply, 1997, p.2-4.

12 Qutb, Sayyid., "Paving the Way." *Nida'u1 Islam*, no. 23. available from <http://www.islam.org.au/articles/23/qutb.htm>. Internet. Accessed 18 February 2003.

13 Quran, Ali (ed.), p. 48.

14 The term Islamist will be used interchangeably with Political Islam to denote those individuals and groups who advocate the primacy of Islamic religious views and doctrine over secular models of governance.

15 Esposito, *Islam*, p. 20.

16 Ibid, p. 21.

17 Hunter, Shireen T., *The Future of Islam and the West* p. 62-63.

18 The distinction here being that orthodoxy requires internal acceptance of belief patterns whereas orthopraxy requires adherents external manifestations of belief in terms of practices which must be followed.

19 The *Shi'a* — *Sunni* divide is based on the question of the transfer of the temporal authority Muhammad possessed as Khalif, and it was after his death that the problem of who should rightly succeed him arose. See Hunter, p. 38-39 for a short analysis.

20 Saad-Ghorayeb, Amal. *Hizbu'llah – Politics and Religion*. London: Pluto Press, 2002 p. 18.

21 Ibid, p. 16-17.

22 Quran, Ali (ed.), p.

23 (Discover Islam, www.dislamic.org/jihad/meaning.html)

24 Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah*, p. 121-122.

25 Abode of war can also be translated as the place of rebellion, i.e. the opposite of the place of submission.

26 On the side of conjecture, one could argue that the fact of many of the most notorious of Islamist activities such as Osama bin Laden and the 20 hijackers along with many other individuals who commit terrorist acts come from comfortable and even wealthy family backgrounds and therefore the question that a lack of public goods and services offered by the state did not affect them, either in their home countries or the Western ones they went to live. I would counter by stating that for these individuals, they committed such acts because they had

the means to do so, and undertook acts of violence against what they perceived to be enemies of Islam on behalf of many others who did not have such means.

27 Hunter, The Future of Islam, p. 101

28 Worth, Robert, Sayyid Qutb-Father of Islamic Radicals, Article in The New York Times, 24 Oct 01.

29 See Eaton, Islam, p. 42.

30 An interesting web sit which details how Muslims should deal with non-Muslims can be found at www.i-cias.com/e.o/jihad.htm

31 Saad-Ghorayeb, Hizbu'llah, p. 127-128.

32 Hunter, The Future of Islam p. 61.

33 The acceptance and public acclamation of the Profession of Faith (*shahada*) wherein one formally submits to belief as a Muslim (the saying of the Bism'ullah); The saying of prayers to be accomplished five times daily in the direction of Mecca (*salat*); The giving of alms to the needy (*zakat*); The holding of fast during the month of Ramadan; and last, The undertaking of a pilgrimage to Mecca to walk in the footsteps of the Prophet (*hajj*).

34 Esposito, Islam, p. 135.

35 Cooley, John K., Unholy Wars, Pluto Press, London 1999, pages 82.

36 Ibid, p. 241-242.

37 Bernard Lewis, The Roots of Muslim Rage, The Atlantic Magazine, Sept 1990.

38 Saad-Ghorayeb, Hizbu'llah, p. 122

39 Haleem, p. 63

40 Ibid, p.71

41 Quran, Ali (ed.), p. 663.

42 Yahiya Emerick, What Islam is All About, p. 13-15.

43 Esposito, Islam, p. 20-21

44 Quran, Ali (ed.), p.106.

45 Khadduri, Majid. War and Peace in the Law of Islam. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955, p. 4.

46 Quoted from article on Sayyid Qutb at <http://www.islam.org.au/articles/23/qutb.htm>

47 See Barber, Benjamin, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, 1995, p. 205-207.

48 al-Farabi, as quoted in Khadduri, p.5

49 Khaduri, p.8-10.

50 Eaton, Islam, p. 41.

51 Esposito, Islam. P. 184-185.

52 Hunter, *The Future of Islam*, p. 36-37.

53 Eqbal Ahmad: *Terrorism: Theirs and Ours*, p. 34

54 U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 2001*

55 Wisgerhof, Amy E., *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement Journal*, Vol 8, Issue 2, 1999; p. 60

56 Ibid, p.70.

57 www.nmhschool.org/tthornton/sayyid_qutb.htm accessed on 10 Mar 03

58 Kissinger, Henry A., *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1957p.44.

59 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 95.

60 Friedman, Thomas L., *Under the Arab Street*, Op-Ed piece, *The New York Times*, 23 Oct 2002.

61 Hunter, *The Future of Islam*, p. 64.

62 Huntington, Samuel P., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, 1996, p. 21.

63 It can be argued that the Russian Federation as the successor state to the Soviet Union could no longer project power to the degree necessary to threaten the security or vital interests of the United States. Just as importantly, with the stripping away of Marxist ideology as a guiding principle of both its internal and external relations, the new Russian Federation has lacked the will and reason to further challenge the dominant position of the United States around the world. China as the only other nuclear power which could present a similar threat is still limited by its inability to project power outside of its regional sphere of influence.

64 Khaduri, p.295

65 An interesting article shortly after the 11 Sep 01 attacks was penned by Professor Michael McFaul of Stanford University and published in the *Washington Post*, 22 September 2001

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